

CHOOSING A COLLEGE



CHOOSING A COLLEGE CAN BE A DAUNTING TASK. SHOULD IT BE THE BIG SCHOOL WITH THE GREAT CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM BUT IS KNOWN TO BE A "PARTY SCHOOL"? THE PRIVATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL WITH THE PRICY TUITION? THE SMALL LIBERAL ARTS SCHOOL SO FAR FROM HOME YOU'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO DO YOUR OWN LAUNDRY? THIS ACTIVITY WILL HELP YOU NARROW DOWN THE MANY OPTIONS AND DISCOVER WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- M&M's, Skittles, or colored thumbtacks and a corkboard
- A list of 4-6 colleges being considered
- The attached worksheet

Your worksheet has three circles arranged in a Venn diagram. In order to get the best possible results, *be well informed and tough when providing answers*. Don't allow yourself to make decisions based on rumors or assumptions. Do your research and get all of the facts.

Begin by listing 4-6 schools you are considering in the gray boxes on the left. Line up three markers (like skittles) of the same color next to the name of each school (bonus points if the color aligns with the school colors). Then critically and honestly answer these three questions:

1. IS THERE AN ESTABLISHED FAITH COMMUNITY WHERE I CAN CONNECT WITH GOD AND OTHERS?

Christian colleges aren't for everyone. But every student does need a strong community of faith-based peers during their college years. This could be as simple as participation in a campus ministry or involvement in a church near the school.

Explore further: *Is this a faith community in which I will be comfortable worshipping, volunteering, and sharing life with others? How will I get there each week? Who can I contact prior to arriving on campus, to let them know I am interested in attending?*

If the answer to question #1 is yes, move one of the school's color-coded markers into the FAITH circle. If the answer is no, discard it (or eat it!). Once you have evaluated each school in the same way, move on to question #2.

2. WILL THIS SCHOOL PREPARE ME FOR MY FUTURE IN LIGHT OF MY UNIQUE INTERESTS, SKILLS, AND GOALS?

This may mean you won't attend your parents' alma mater or study to be a lawyer like your sister. That's okay! Every person has an individual skill set and it's important to find a school that will further those skills.

Explore further: *What degrees does this school have that supports my future career goals? What clubs, trips, and affiliated ministries or organizations in which I can gain first-hand experience? Do they have a philosophy that aligns with my character?*

If the answer to question #2 is yes, slide one of the school's color-coded markers over into the ACADEMICS circle. If the answer is no, discard it (or eat it!) Once you have evaluated each school in the same way, move on to question #3.

3. DOES THE COST ASSOCIATED WITH THIS SCHOOL PROVIDE THE FREEDOM TO MAKE CLASSWORK AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING A PRIORITY?

Everyone knows college costs an arm and leg. You might need those one day, so make sure you pick a school that will only incur the amount of debt with which you are comfortable and will allow you the financial freedom to participate in experiential learning (ie: a spring break wilderness trip, studying abroad, volunteering, interning, etc.).

Keep in mind that an expensive school can quickly become affordable with academic scholarships and grants. Contact each school's financial aid office and ask for input on your specific situation.

Explore further: *Will I need to work during the semester to afford this school? If so, how many hours a week?*

If the answer to question #3 is yes, move that school's remaining color-coded markers into the STEWARDSHIP circle. If the answer is no, discard it (or eat it!) Once you have evaluated each school in the same way, you'll be ready to narrow them down.

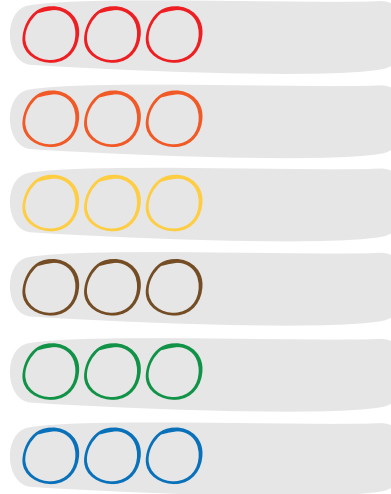
NOW, GET YOUR RESULTS!

Just in case you skipped Venn Diagram day in math, here's how to navigate the information you have collected. If a school's color is only in one circle, leave it where it is. If a color is in two circles, combine and move them to the space between those circles. If a color is in all three circles, combine and move them to the bulls' eye in the center.

One circle: If you answered yes to only one of the questions, attending this school is probably not a good idea. You will need to think carefully about the impact this choice will make on your future faith, career, and family.

Two circles: If you answered yes to two questions, this school will be a challenge but not entirely impossible. You will need to invest extra to supplement what is lacking in the absence of that third circle.

Three circles: If you answered yes to all three questions, Bingo! You have found the school that meets your needs in all areas! Do you have more than one school in the center? Move forward with confidence. Choose based on location, weather, or the school mascot.



**MAKE FAITH THE STARTING POINT.
CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCORECARD.
LEVERAGE THE STEWARDSHIP LENS.**

- One circle = Foolish
- Two circles = Hard
- Three circles = Wise

